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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0265
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 0258
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT 1178
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA 3850

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 000188

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE, NEA/IPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/23/2019
TAGS: [EUN](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SP](#) [MR](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN NOT LIKELY TO SUPPORT ADDITIONAL MAURITANIAN
SANCTIONS

REF: A. SECSTATE 13962
[1](#)B. MADRID 177
[1](#)C. 08MADRID1132

Classified By: ADCM William H. Duncan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff delivered reftel A demarche to Spanish MFA European Correspondent Maria Luisa Benitez-Dononso February 20, stressing the EU's opportunity to support the AU and its imposition of targeted sanctions against the military junta. Benitez-Dononso restated Spain's condemnation of the coup and desire for the restoration of democracy, but said that Spain would not likely support additional sanctions. She reiterated Spain's support for existing EU and AU sanctions and the continued withholding of EU developmental assistance, however, and made clear that with Mauritania it is not "business as usual."

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: This approach falls in line with Spain's general approach, preferring to encourage good behavior, offering a "carrot," rather than punish the bad. Moreover, and as explained previously by other MFA officials, Spain does not want to see Mauritania, a country not far from its own territory, become a "failed state." Like Germany, Spain fears that further isolation may give way to such unintended results. Mauritania's proximity also requires bilateral cooperation on illegal immigration and counter-terrorism issues, and the GOS considers its fluid relationship with the Mauritians vital to its own national security.
CHACON